

not for profit, are but different attempts to emphasize the instrumental character of economic activities, by reference to an ideal which is held to express the true nature of man.

Of that nature and its possibilities the Christian Church was thought, during the greater part of the period discussed in these pages, to hold by definition a conception distinctively its own. It was therefore committed to the formulation of a social theory, not as a philanthropic gloss upon the main body of its teaching, but as a vital element in a creed concerned with the destiny of men whose character is formed, and whose spiritual potentialities are fostered or starved, by the commerce of the market-place and the institutions of society. Stripped of the eccentricities of period and place, its philosophy had as its centre a determination to assert the superiority of moral principles over economic appetites, which have their place, and an important place, in the human scheme, but which, like other natural appetites, when flattered and pampered and overfed, bring ruin to the soul and confusion to society. Its casuistry was an attempt to translate these principles into a code of practical ethics, sufficiently precise to be applied to the dusty world of warehouse and farm. Its discipline was an effort, too often corrupt and pettifogging in practice, but not ignoble

in concep-
tion, to work the Christian virtues into
the spotted
texture of individual character and
social conduct*
That -practice was often a sorry parody on
theory is a
truism which should need no emphasis.
But in a world
where principles and conduct are
unequally mated,
men are to be judged by their reach as well
as by their
grasp—by the ends at which they aim as
well as by
the success with which they attain them.
The prudent
critic will try himself by his achievement
rather than
by his ideals, and his neighbours, living and
dead alike,
by their ideals not less than by their
achievement.
Circumstances alter from age to age, and the
practical